

WHAT CAN HOPE DO FOR YOU?

Last week we presented a lesson dealing with “Where is your hope?” In that lesson we addressed what hope is - a well-grounded expectation of something yet future. For Christians, hope means we have something better waiting for us when this life is over. There is something better than this life which is often filled with disappointments, struggle, troubles and uncertainties. We noted that the word “hope” is used about 150 in the Bible, distributed fairly evenly between the OT and NT. We then examined a handful of verses that help us understand what this hope is and what it is about – from Romans 8:24-25 which notes that hope is based upon what is unseen; Hebrews 11:1 notes that it is our faith builds our hope; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 shows how our hope sets us apart from those of this world who has not hope; and even 2 Timothy 1:12 gives us an example of hope as Paul prepares to finish his life on earth.

We also addressed some sources of our hope – including God Himself, His word, Jesus coming to this earth and an emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus – you prove that Jesus arose from the dead, you have reason to hope; and the finally, our hope we have in the promise of His return.

Today, I want to address some things Christian hope (that is when we live our lives with the hope God desires) can do for us. We want to notice some passages of scripture in the NT that life us up when we live with hope.

I. What can hope do for you?

a. ***It can give us faith in Christ and love for our brethren*** –

Colossians 1:3-5, Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving on their behalf was because of their faith and love which were motivated by their hope.

Hebrews 11:1 – we notice again that our faith is related to our hope. In that text, faith is the byproduct of our hope. It is the assurance or substance (“title deed”) of what we are hoping for.

While faith is at the foundation of our lives as Christians, it is meaningless without hope. When we

believe God (trust in Him) through His word, and other means, we KNOW (by faith) there is something better than the let downs of this life. Our HOPE is that we might achieve that.

Faith and Hope go hand in hand! As your hope increases, so will your faith, AND as your faith increases, so will your hope.

b. ***It can give us peace*** – Romans 15:13. Paul’s desire was that the “God of hope” would fill them with all joy and peace in believing.

Hope is something that can give us calm when we are facing anxiety. Be reminded again of

Philippians 4:6-7 – we turn to God in prayer with our anxieties, and if we genuinely cast our cares upon Him (because He cares for you – 1 Peter 5:6-7), through faith we “let it go” and that gives us peace, even in the midst of our troubles.

Colossians 3:15 calls for us to let the peace of God rule in our hearts.

c. ***It can give us cause to rejoice*** – Again in Romans 15:13, the “God of hope” fills us with joy. Earlier in Romans 12:12, among the qualities we find in Christians is as they are fervent in spirit serving the Lord, they are “*rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer...*”

When you think about it, when you have hope and you think about how good it will be, it ought to cause joy in your life. Think of one who is awaiting some anticipated good – your family is coming to see you (or you going to see them) and the plane is in the air. There’s a joy in that.

Many of our songs are designed to reflect this anticipation – Alone at Eve (SS #450), How Beautiful Heaven Must Be (SS, #357), “I’ll live On” (SS #351), “O Think of a Home Over There” (SS #359), etc.

d. ***IT will cause us to glory in our adversities*** – associated with the previous point, we will rejoice EVEN in our adversities (trials and troubles).

Consider Romans 5:3-5. Tribulations can produce much good – perseverance, character and

ultimately hope. In this, it will also manifest your character

Over the past few weeks we have been reminded that we need to be rejoicing even in troubling times. When you find Paul and Silas in prison singing songs of praise to God (Acts 16:25), the apostles leaving the council, having been beaten, rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41), or Paul declaring he would GLADLY spend and be spent, even though it seemed to be unappreciated (2 Corinthians 12:15).

Hope gives you the perspective to approach even the troubling times with a good attitude.

e. ***It will cause us to purify ourselves*** –

1 John 3:3 speaks of how when our Lord is revealed, *we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then in vs. 3 we note that everyone who has this hope in Him purifies Himself, just as He is pure.*

Hope gives us reason to live pure lives. That means a willingness to give up impurities though the world may see them as acceptable – whether it be our clothing, where we go, our language, the types of entertainment we permit in our homes or we go to, etc.

In essence, our hope is reason to be different as we have addressed in recent studies. 2 Corinthians 7:1, having addressed how we are to come out from among them and be separate, we then read, *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

f. ***It will cause us to give the benefit of the doubt*** – Hope will also determine how we deal with others.

1 Corinthians 13:7, as Paul describes love among the qualities, we find that love, *“Bears all things, believes all things, HOPES all things, endures all things...”* This text emphasizes that when our love is what it ought to be, we will live assuming the best in a given situation, unless something proves contrary.

We are living in very pessimistic times (even if we discount the present pandemic). News is by far more negative than encouraging. People have lost faith in each other as a rule, especially when we see so much ungodliness around us. And that can cause us to be cynical in a given situation. Far too many have come to expect the worst in everything until proven otherwise.

AMONG the reasons behind such negativity is a lack of hope. But our text on love here says we should bear all things and believe and hope “all things” meaning that we believe the best will happen, and we hope for it. We should be very careful before we give up on people, and even a given situation. But do we? Let us be reminded that while there might be times for pessimism and doubt, that ought to be the EXCEPTION rather than the rule.

Christians need to be optimistic people!

g. ***It can cause us to defend our faith and evangelize*** – 1 Peter 3:15 calls for us not only to sanctify God in our hearts, but also be ready to defend the hope that is in us.

WHEN our hope is strong, we will gladly defend it before others and we will want to share it with others.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 speaks of how we seek to persuade men. We will NOT do that if we do not have a hope that there are some out there willing to change. Remember the admonition of our Lord to His disciples in John 4:35 where He noted that the fields are white unto harvest.

AND 1 Corinthians 9:22 where Paul noted he became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some – this was hope displayed that moved him to try, even if most rejected him.

h. ***It will give your life real purpose*** –

Recall Ephesians 2:12 which described their former life as one “having no hope and without God in the world.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13 notes that we do not sorrow as others who have no hope. These passages remind us that one thing that makes us different is that our life has REAL purpose.

How sad it must be to know that no matter what you do in this, if that is all there is, you have no real purpose. Even great achievements are nothing but delaying the inevitable.

We have a goal that is greater than this life – to spend eternity in heaven with God and the godly.

And if we can, we take as many with us as possible.

1 Peter 1:13 – a call to gird up the loins of your mind and rest your hope fully upon the grace to be brought to us when Jesus is revealed.

Hebrews 6:18-19 speaks of the hope set before us. It is our anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. Colossians 1:5 – speaks of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 – the helmet of the armor of God is our hope of salvation. (Ephesians 6:17)

So as we see, hope gives our life a real purpose. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

- i. ***It will encourage you to keep going*** – hope gives us incentive to not give up. We know that setbacks and problems are not the end. We don't quit because of problems, no matter how great they are.

The Bible emphasizes endurance, and how that is related to our hope.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 – mentioned their patience of hope,

Hebrews 10:23, concluding all that our Lord has done for us and how He now reigns as our High Priest, the writer encourages us, "*Lest us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*" In other words, DON'T QUIT! A little further in that very chapter, we are again called upon to endure 10:36-39). THEN, Hebrews 11 gives us numerous great examples of enduring faith.

Titus 2:11-13 – The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of Jesus. BECAUSE we know He is return, we endure and keep living as we should.

Hebrews 3:6 – calls for us to hold fast our confidence and hope firm to the end,

ALL these passages and others show us that our hope encourages us to endure, to not quit, to keep going. Remember the words of our Lord Himself in Luke 9:62 which notes that anyone who looks back (quits) is not fit for the kingdom of God.

And thus we can see the practicality of hope in our lives. May we resolve that we are going to with hope serve God. So where is your hope? There are many today who put their hope in the fleeting pleasures of this life – wealth, power, fame, sensual gratification, or other worldly pursuits. Their hopes are temporal at best, and very likely unstable. Christians, as we have seen hope in something better and the setbacks of this life do not rob us of that hope. As Paul said in Romans 5:5, after describing how tribulations can produce hope among other things said, "*Now hope does not disappoint...!* Where is your hope? Think about it!